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April 28th, 2021

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
2065 Rayburn HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair and Ranking Member:

As you begin crafting the fiscal year (FY) 2022 Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you fully support providing robust resources for combatting the bark beetle epidemic.

I urge the committee to fully address the Bark Beetle epidemic, as Bark Beetles have caused significant damage on roughly 100,000 square miles of forest in the western United States alone. There are 600 different species of bark beetles in the United States. Several species, such as the mountain pine beetle (*Dendroctonus ponderosae*), attack and kill live trees. Most species of bark beetles live in dead, weakened, or dying hosts. Along the West Coast through the Rocky Mountains, bark beetles have affected tens of millions of acres of forest. While bark beetles are native to U.S. forests and play important ecological roles, they can cause extensive tree mortality and negative economic and social impacts.

In 2019, Colorado saw the spruce beetle epidemic spread across 178,000 new acres. In fact, spruce beetles have killed millions of trees on more than 1.8 million acres in Colorado since 2000 and provided increased funds for wildfires. In Colorado, 2020 was one of the worst wildfire seasons our state has ever endured with the three largest fires in state history.

Bark beetle epidemics and catastrophic wildfires are a significant threat. This can be minimized by thinning overgrown forests and removing hazardous fuels produced by beetle overpopulation. This process is sure to create jobs and increases overall forest health.

It is of the utmost urgency that the federal government adopt a forward-thinking, active management strategy that combats dangerous wildfires before they ignite. For this reason, it is imperative the (FY) 2022 Appropriations bill must provide robust resources for combatting the bark beetle epidemic.

Sincerely,

Lauren Boebert

Member of Congress